

Finding of No Significant Impact

Term Grazing Permit 2704502 and 2704520 Renewals on the Railroad Pass Allotment

NEPA DOI-BLM-NV-L010-2011-0007-EA

I have reviewed Environmental Assessment (EA) DOI-BLM-NV-L010-2011-0007-EA dated August 2011. After consideration of the environmental effects as described in the EA, and incorporated herein, I have determined that the proposed action identified in the EA will not significantly affect the quality of the human environment and that an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) is not required to be prepared.

I have determined the proposed action is in conformance with the approved Ely District Resource Management Plan (2008), and is consistent with applicable plans and policies of county, state, tribal and Federal agencies. This finding and conclusion is based on my consideration of the Council on Environmental Quality's (CEQ) criteria for significance (40 CFR 1508.27), both with regard to the context and the intensity of impacts described in the EA.

Context:

The Railroad Pass Allotment encompasses approximately 27,025 public land acres. The grazing permit area occurs entirely within White Pine County, and is situated approximately 25 miles south of Jiggs, Nevada. The western portion of this allotment borders Eureka County and the northern portion borders Elko County. The allotment reaches from the ridge of the Diamond Mountain Range in the west to approximately Huntington Creek in the east. It is bounded in the north by the Elko-White Pine County Line and stretches approximately 12 miles south. This allotment occurs entirely within the Huntington Watershed.

Intensity:

1. Impacts that may be both beneficial and adverse.

The EA has considered both beneficial and adverse impacts of the proposed action. None of the impacts considered in the EA approach the threshold of significance (i.e. exceeding air or drinking water quality standards, contributing to a decline in the population of a listed species, etc.). In other words, none of the resource impacts are intensely adverse or beneficial.

2. The degree to which the proposed action affects public health or safety.

The proposed action would not result in potentially substantial or adverse impacts to public health and safety.

3. Unique characteristics of the geographic area such as proximity to historic or cultural resources, park lands, prime farmlands, wetlands, wild and scenic rivers, or ecologically critical areas.

The EA and the Ely RMP/EIS have evaluated the impacts of livestock grazing on natural resources and unique geographic characteristics. No site specific concerns were identified.

4. The degree to which the effects on the quality of the human environment are likely to be controversial.

Whereas it may be controversial to continue to permit livestock grazing on public lands, there is little controversy as to what they are. The EA analyzed various alternatives to address any controversy.

5. **The degree to which the possible effects on the human environment are highly uncertain or involve unique or unknown risks.**

The effects of livestock grazing are well known and documented. Management practices are employed to meet resource objectives and maintain or achieve rangeland health.

6. **The degree to which the action may establish a precedent for future actions with significant effects or represents a decision in principle about a future consideration.**

The proposed action will not establish a precedent for future actions with significant effects or represent a decision in principle about a future consideration. Renewing the grazing permit does not establish a precedent for other Rangeland Health Assessments and Decisions. Any future actions or projects within the area or in surrounding areas will be analyzed and evaluated on their own merits and would be implemented or not, independent of the actions currently selected.

7. **Whether the action is related to other actions with individually insignificant but cumulatively significant impacts.**

No significant cumulative effects have been identified in the EA. Past, present, and reasonably foreseeable future actions in the cumulative effects study area would not result in cumulatively significant impacts in association with the proposed and/or alternative actions. For any actions that may be proposed in the future, further environmental analysis, including the assessment of cumulative effects, would be required.

8. **The degree to which the action may adversely affect districts, sites, highways, structures, or objects listed in or eligible for listing in the NRHP or may cause loss or destruction of significant scientific, cultural, or historical resources.**

Any districts, sites, highways, structures, or objects listed in or eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) were identified in the project area and considered in the EA. The proposed action will not cause the loss or destruction of significant scientific, cultural or historical resources.

9. **The degree to which the action may adversely affect an endangered or threatened species or its habitat that has been determined to be critical under the ESA of 1973.**

The BLM is required by the Endangered Species Act of 1973, as amended, to ensure that no action on the public lands jeopardizes a threatened, endangered, or proposed species. Threatened, Endangered, or Proposed species were considered in the EA and are not known to be present in the project area.

10. **Whether the action threatens a violation of Federal, State, or local law or requirements imposed for the protection of the environment.**

The proposed action will not violate or threaten to violate any Federal, State, or local law or requirement imposed for the protection of the environment.

Signed:

/s/ *Chris Mayer*, acting

9/2/2011

Gary W. Medlyn
Field Manager
Egan Field Office

Date